



Okehampton Town Council

Town Hall  
Fore Street  
Okehampton  
Devon  
EX20 1AA

01837 53179

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**Minutes of a meeting of Okehampton Town Council held on  
Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026 at 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Okehampton**

**Members Present:**

Cllr R Colman (Mayor)  
Cllr T Cummings  
Cllr C Holt  
Cllr A Fisher  
Cllr M Ireland  
Cllr C Marsh  
Cllr D McNeill  
Cllr M Richards

Cllr L Bird (Chairman, Property)  
Cllr T Leech (Chairman, Planning)  
Cllr J Yelland (Chairman, Policy & Resources)

**In Attendance:**

Mrs E James (Town Clerk)  
Cllr J Goffey (WDBC)  
Cllr G Dexter (WDBC)  
2 Members of the Public

**634. Apologies for Absence**

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Ireland, it was **RESOLVED** to approve apologies tendered by Cllr Tolley (personal).

Absent: Cllr Weekes

**635. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr McNeill declared a personnel interest in Minute Reference 644.5

**636. Public Participation**

The Clerk advised that no contact had been received from the member of public who addressed the Council at the meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 and therefore it had not been possible to respond.

**637. Members' Questions**

Cllr Cummings commented on internet disruption during the Annual Town Assembly which affected the livestreaming towards the end of the meeting.

**638. West Devon Borough Council**

A report from Cllr Leech had previously been circulated. Items not on the report were highlighted including government funding to assist with the cost of heating oil which had been cascaded to district councils. WDBC were trying to identify the most vulnerable residents in order to prioritise the financial assistance.

(A member of the public arrived)

Cllr Goffey had attended WDBC's Wildlife Warden Spring Conference and provided information about this event.

Cllr Dexter reported on a housing fund which would be used by WDBC to purchase houses to assist the homeless instead of accommodating them in other locations.

**639. Devon County Council**

No report.

**640. Questions Arising from Member Reports**

Cllr Ireland commented on Cllr Goffey's report about the decline of hedgehogs. Cllr Marsh thanked the WDBC's councillors present for their reports and commented that the other Okehampton WDBC councillors did not often interact with the council. Cllr Cummings asked the DCC/WDBC councillors about footpaths along Crediton Road and if bus stops could be provided along the bus routes.

**641. Adoption of Minutes of Committees and to Receive Questions from Members Thereon**

**641.1** On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the **Policy & Resources Committee** meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

**641.2** On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the **Personnel Sub-Committee** meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

**642. Full Council Meeting Minutes**

On the proposition of Cllr Colman, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to adopt as a true record the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 for signing by the Chairman.

**643. Co-Option of Councillor**

Cllrs Fisher and McNeill declared a personal interest.

One application for co-option had been received. The candidate briefly addressed the council, following which questions were posed by Councillors.

In accordance with the Co-Option Policy, the candidate stepped outside of the room whilst a written vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** (11 in favour, 1 against) that Michael Ricketts be appointed as Councillor to the North Ward.

**644. Projects and Consultations**

**644.1 Local Government Reorganisation**

DCCs response to a question posed by the council had been received and circulated. It was commented that it had not been clearly answered and that the consultation was open until 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

Cllr Leech, being a Member of WDBC, declared a personal interest in the potential transfer of assets.

WDBC's Asset Policy was noted. It was confirmed that only Category 3 assets 'Parks, open spaces and sports pitches' would be considered for transfer to town and parish councils. Each town and parish council had 1 opportunity to make a request with an 8<sup>th</sup> May deadline. Assets would be leased for a term of 999 years and would not be transferred freehold. Town and parish councils would be required to pay WDBC's legal fees.

The public toilets in Market Street which were already leased to the council may be considered for extension. It was noted that WDBC were providing Tavistock Town Council a grant to assist with costs of public toilet provision on transfer of an asset to them. Further consideration to be given to this topic at the April meeting of full council.

#### **644.2 Community Governance Boundary Change**

A solicitor had been appointed to review precepting legislation.

#### **644.3 Neighbourhood Plan**

The response, previously circulated, from WDBC was noted. Okehampton Hamlets Parish Council had been requested to provide the information required by WDBC.

#### **644.4 Lloyds Bank Closure**

Disappointment was expressed by Councillors that a banking hub was not being provided. An enhanced banking service was available in the Post Office in George Street, and the Lloyds branch would be closing in March 2026.

(Cllr Holt left the meeting)

#### **644.5 Allotments**

Cllrs Ireland, Yelland and Colman declared a personal interest being Okehampton United Charity Trustees.

The Clerk advised that Okehampton United Charities had instructed a Solicitor to draw up a draft lease for consideration.

### **645. Local Organisation Requests**

#### **645.1 Okehampton Carnival**

A request by Cllr Colman that the council support the carnival committee by raising awareness of the need for volunteers and to encourage float entries was considered. It was suggested that the Committee approach the BID and the CVS who would have relevant contact information, written instructions of how to enter a float and the requirements would be helpful to potential entrants. Webcliq were working with the Committee in relation to electronic collection of donations.

#### **645.2 WREN**

Cllr Leech requested that the council consider supporting WREN who were hoping to purchase Ebenezer Hall, the premises they currently occupied. The building was Grade II listed, included an adjacent graveyard and could potentially be noted as a property of national significance. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk write a letter of support.

### **646. Finance**

#### **646.1 Payments**

- On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments, the BACS payments totalled £2,932.11 exclusive of VAT.
- Payments made during the week of 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026 in respect of grants awarded, BACS payments totalling £1,967.97 exclusive of VAT were noted.
- Payments made during the week of 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026, BACS payments totalling £30,853.44 including March salaries, exclusive of VAT were noted.

#### **646.2 Effectiveness of Internal Controls**

The Council considered a report from the Policy & Resources Committee who had reviewed the effectiveness of the council's internal controls. On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Leech it was **RESOLVED** to approve the report.

### **646.3 Asset Register**

The Council reviewed the Asset Register including additions and disposals for the year ended 31/03/2026. On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve:

- a) Additions of £60,427.76
- b) Disposals of £750.00
- c) The Asset Register as of 31st March 2026 totalling £8,945,967

### **646.4 2026/27 Budget**

The Clerk reported that a figure of £5,000 had not been included within a formula and therefore the total anticipated expenditure figure excluded that amount. On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Marsh it was **RESOLVED** to accept this report. Consideration would be given to the virement of £5,000 from general reserves to cover this shortfall after the year end closedown.

### **647. Policies and Documents**

On the proposition of Cllr Yelland, seconded by Cllr Cummings it was **RESOLVED** to approve the following policies and documents as recommended by the Policy & Resources Committee:

- a) Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (new)
- b) Financial Regulations.
- c) Financial Risk Assessment and Management Policy
- d) Internal Control Statement
- e) Play Area Policy (Parks Committee (new)
- f) Treasury and Investment Policy & Strategy
- g) Tree Statement (Planning Committee)
- h) Youth Council Health & Safety Policy

### **648. Cemetery**

A matter arising from the Parks Committee in relation to the positioning of headstones following a recent inspection and action to be taken was noted.

### **649. Mayor's Diary Report**

Cllr Colman had attended a meeting of the Friendly Circle, taken part in a Men's Fundraising Walk, hosted a Coffee Morning in aid Rock2Recovery which had raised £250 and met with one of the Devon Deputy Lord Lieutenants.

## **PART TWO – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**650.** On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded by Cllr Bird it was **RESOLVED** that under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items which are **CONFIDENTIAL** by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council.

### **651. Insurance Quotations**

#### **651.1 Quotation**

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Fisher it was **RESOLVED** to accept the quotation from James Hallam Insurance for the renewal of insurance policies which were due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 at the cost of £21,750.33

#### **651.2 Declarations**

Councillors were reminded of the insurance condition for disclosure of any declaration statements that may relate to them as set out in the report. Any declarations, other than those that may previously have been reported, must be disclosed to the Clerk by no later than 31st March 2026.

**652. 2025/26 Mayor's Awards**

Cllr Cummings declared a personal interest, knowing the person nominated.

On the proposition of Cllr Marsh, seconded by Cllr Bird, it was **RESOLVED** an award be presented to an individual noted by the Clerk. Cllr Marsh to provide the Clerk with relevant information. Consideration to be given to a second nomination at the next meeting of the council alongside one from the Youth Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Order 3 (bb) to permit extension of the meeting following a proposal by Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Leech.

**653. Civic Regalia**

**653.1 Pendant Purchase**

On the proposition of Cllr Cummings, seconded by Cllr Marsh, it was **RESOLVED** to approve a recommendation from the Policy & Resources Committee for the purchase of a new pendant from Fattorini at the cost of £2,843.78. A secure clip would be provided for its use with the new Chain of Office. The historic pendant to be retired alongside the historic Chain of Office and only used for specific events as previously stipulated by the council.

**653.2 Chain Engraving**

A resolution by the Policy & Resources Committee that the new Chain of Office be engraved with the names of past Mayors was noted and **agreed**.

**654. Simmons Park Charity**

The Council noted that the management agreement expired later in the year.

On the proposition of Cllr Ireland, seconded Cllr Colman, it was **RESOLVED** to exit Part 2 and ratify decisions therein.

The meeting was closed at 8.45pm

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Councillor Colman, Mayor